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Approved For Release 2005/08/02 : CIA-RDP81B00080R001400260009-0

NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

NFAC #3642-79

11 July 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM :
Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

SUBJECT : Designation of Priorities for Current Interest NITs

1. At the recent meeting of NFIB to consider the revision of DCID 1/2, a question arose concerning the letter designations ("A-B-C") used to assign priorities to the National Intelligence Topics of Current Interest. The following background information may be of interest. (C)

2. When the NITs were first developed in late 1977, all the Current Interest questions were conceived by the policymakers as carrying a high priority. It was generally agreed that to try to define more than three levels of priority within such a list of questions would be both difficult and of little practical utility. On the other hand, it was thought useful to prioritize the questions in terms of importance relative to each other. There was no intent to relate the PRC(I) members' Current Interest questions to standing Intelligence Community priorities because the former were seen as a quite different order of intelligence requirement than, for example, those expressed in the DCID 1/2 matrix. Hence, a simple three-way letter designation was selected simply to show the urgency of each Topic in relation to others on the list. (S)

3. In contrast, a numbering system identical with that used in the DCID 1/2 attachment was selected for the NITs of Basic Long-term Interest. This comprehensive, rather than selective, list of topics was seen as more comparable to the DCID 1/2 categories. For this reason it is the only NITs list of priorities that the Intelligence Community has attempted to relate directly to the DCID 1/2 priorities. (S)

cc: Members of the National Foreign
Intelligence Board

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